

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Mile High United Way

**Application ID:** 13ES145467

**Program Name:** Colorado Reading Corps

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) The applicant is targeting one of the largest school districts, Jefferson County Public Schools, which has budget cuts with increased enrollment. They also plan to expand into the Aurora Public Schools, focusing on schools determined by the needs of the students which will be based on screening data using the Minnesota Reading Corps-validated assessment instruments and evidence-based practices.

(+) The applicant is targeting populations where students are below reading proficiency levels and where the free and reduced lunch rate is at least 42% of the students.

(+) The applicant describes the Members' activities, roles, and responsibilities and is requesting 50 full-time AmeriCorps members, placing 48 full-time Members in school sites in Jefferson County and Aurora Public Schools. Two Members will focus their time coordinating the volunteers and engagement effectively addressing the need with full-time attention and commitment.

(+) The applicant demonstrates how the volunteers and full-time Members will be utilized to improve literacy instruction goals of the program. Students will receive individualized tutoring in reading and literacy coaches.

(+) Appropriate skills training will be held at the beginning and throughout the service time of the Members in assessment and interventions, AmeriCorps guidelines, and parent and community member public relations and recruitment. Members should possess the skills necessary to reach targeted goals.

(+) The applicant adequately describes how the interventions are evidenced-informed measures that will assess student growth in building reading proficiency in the target group. Research concurs that providing early interventions in reading is an efficient method in raising reading levels and proficiencies. Results from Minnesota's Reading Corp's literacy interventions and tutoring strategies offer compelling evidence in the target group's reading gains by 85%.

(+) The applicant identifies a significant number of participants who will complete the program and show robust

improvement over the three-year period. The applicant projects, based on their performance measures, 1,425 students will complete the program and 1,211 students will show improved academic performance in literacy. The progress of these students will be monitored and reported annually via internal and external evaluators

(-) It is not clear how the low graduation rate in Denver, Colorado correlates to the applicant cited “most highly educated workforces in the country.” This, with the demographic information provided, is not complete enough to give a clear understanding of how economically disadvantaged the targeted areas are.

(-) The applicant does not sufficiently demonstrate the impact their program will have on the community.